The Stray

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The Stray

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Summary

Will had run away from his abusive 'father' in the middle of winter, nearly freezing to death, Will meets an angel who saves him.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Will sobbed softly to himself as he shivered, his ears drooped as he sniffled, tail curling close around him, 'how could all this happen?' He thought sullenly.

He was huddled in the corner of an alleyway- he wasn't even sure where- shivering as the night got colder around him.

He wanted to go home but he knew he couldn't… not anymore…he would be there…

After Will's father had died when he were small, his mother had been given to a new master, they had lived together with 'father' as he insisted being called that, in a small flat.

There wasn't enough money to be extravagant, but there was enough to live on and as time went by, Will thought it was a fairly good life.

But when his mother passed away two years ago, that's when things changed.

Will's 'father' had stopped laughing, soon he stopped working, then he started drinking…

He even started to hit Will every now and then, but Will kept his chin up. He always kept the hope that things would get better.

Will had got home from his small part time job that evening to find the floor covered in bottles and cans.

Will had yelled at him then for spending all the money he had earned for food on more booze.

Then father suddenly jumped at Will and pinned him down.

"you look so much like your mother" he had said hotly in Will's ear as he held him down.

Will managed to get away (still wasn't sure how) and he ran. He was too panicked to think where he would run to or how far he went but when he finally calmed down, he couldn't recognize anything around him.

Will had curled up and hugged himself. He hadn't taken time to grab his coat as he ran out of the house and the temperature was dropping fast.

As he looked around again he realized it was starting to snow 'Great...' he thought as the flakes started to settle around him.

As time passed, Will started to get so tired. He'd been through so much today and he just wanted to sleep.

A small part of his brain kept telling him to stay awake and not sleep but he did his best to ignore it... he was so tired after all...

"Are you alright?" a voice from above him asked in a thick accent, Will managed to look up slowly.

The street lamp behind the man made him only a silhouette but Will could tell he was tall and well built in a large trench coat the light reflecting off his dark blonde hair, and Will's fuzzy brain wondered if it was a halo.

He knelt down in front of Will, "Are you alright?" he repeated softly.

Will tried to answer but he couldn't form the words.

The man stood suddenly and Will jumped slightly, then he felt something heavy placed over him. It was the trench coat, it was brown and thick and so soft, Will knew it must be expensive.

But he soon forgot all of that with the blessed warmth that came with it, then he felt a pair of strong arms around him, lifting him up and carrying him.

At this point Will was too tired to think and too warm to really care where he was being taken as he drifted off into the darkness.

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when Will woke up he was very confused. He was wrapped in blankets and laying on a couch in front of a large ornate fireplace. He was in fresh clothes and his hair, ears, and tail had been dried. He tried to remember what had happened.

He was lost... it started snowing... he gasped softly, he had seen an angel… he remembered seeing a figure surrounded by light bending over him, then being surrounded by warmth and carried somewhere.

'Am I dead?' He thought, looking around the room, it was very clean and bright even though the only light source was the fire.

He tried to sit up but got dizzy almost immediately and a voice said "Don't try to move yet!" followed by rustling and two pairs of feet coming forward, and into his view came the tall man from the ally and a young woman.

The woman was smiling at Will and the kindness in her eyes put Will at ease almost at once.

"A-am I dead?" Will asked softly, his voice still not wanting to work too well, "is... this heaven?"

The woman chuckled softly, "No dear, you're still alive, though it was a close thing for a while there."

Will again tried to sit up and that's when the man finally spoke "you should not be moving around yet, just relax. you are safe here."

The woman knelt down next to Will, "My name is Alana Bloom, but you can call me Alana, ok? What's your name?"

It took Will a moment to speak but he managed to finally say "W-Will...."

Alana smiled encouragingly, "Well it's very nice to meet you Will. I'm glad you're alright."

"What happened to me?" Will asked horsley wishing he had some water.

"Hannibal found you on his way home from work," Alana explained, "he brought you home and then called me, you were lucky he found you when he did, it took us a bit, but we were able to warm you up."

Will nodded slowly, remembering the snow and Hannibal's warm coat…

"Do you need anything sweetie?" Alana asked, snapping Will out of his thoughts.

"Could I have some water?"

Alana nodded and stood, "I'll go get it. Hannibal will help you get settled." With that, she turned and left the room.

Hannibal bent down, he made sure Will was comfortable, then he moved the couch closer to the fire, giving Will's ear a reassuring scratch.

It surprised Will, it had been so long since he had had affection or any type of gentle touch, he found himself wanting to lean into the hand as his tail thumped weakly under the blankets.

A little while later Alana came back with a cup of water and sat next to Will while he sipped it.

"If you don't mind my asking…" Alana said softly, "what were you doing in that alley way?"

Will thought a bit, trying to remember... then it came crashing back, 'father' and what he had tried to do and Will burst into tears.

Alana held him, stroking his ears gently as Will cried, stammering out what had happened to him and what his 'father' did.

Alana held him close, "It's ok sweetie, he won't hurt you again. you're safe here."

Hannibal, who had remained silent through the story, suddenly pushed away from the mantle, making Will jump.

"Will?" he asked seriously.

"Y-yes?" Will managed, dropping his eyes quickly.

Hannibal sighed, "You don't have to go back to him again."

Will shake your head "I might not have a choice..."

Alana looked at him "What do you mean?"

Will looked at the floor, "he'd never let me... and even if I did manage to... he'd find me... I tried before..." Will lifted up his sleeve and Hannibal frowned deeply.

Alana covered her mouth in shock, "I saw those but... I never thought that..." Alana looked at Hannibal "what should we do? we can't send him back to that man…"

Hannibal nodded slightly, "Will, I would like you to stay here, I have a few other canines that can keep you company and keep you safe. I will find a way to keep that… man… away."

Will blinked, Hannibal had sounded so different when he mentioned father… almost like he was talking about something on his shoe, but Will didn't ask, he was too tired, "Th-thank you… so much…"

Hannibal smiled gently, "You are very welcome, Will."

Will woke up the next morning in a large guest room, well his room now, there was a lot of noise downstairs and Will was scared that father had already found him. Quickly, he grabbed his clothes and got dressed, then he slowly made his way down the stairs.

As he entered the dining room he was met with a loud crash which made him jump back in alarm.

The crash had come from the kitchen and he could hear someone yelling in another language.

Will crept to the door and opened it a sliver, inside he saw Hannibal yelling at a tall canine man, like Will but… judging from the ears, he was a Doberman, his cut, pointed ears very different from Will's Bay Retriever ears.

The man looked wholly unimpressed by Hannibal's anger that he had apparently burned the breakfast.

"H-Hannibal?" Will asked tentatively.

Hannibal turned, "Oh, good morning Will... Did you sleep well?"

Will nodded, "I-I heard yelling..."

Hannibal sighed and slicked back his hair, even though it didn't look out of place at all, "I'm sorry... I didn't mean to wake you. I-"

"Who's this little mouse?" The Doberman asked, an accent, not quite like Hannibal's but close, lacing his words, he folded his muscled arms, moving forward and towering over Will.

Will flinched back slightly, not meaning to but not being able to help it, his tail tucking between his legs as his ears drooped in fear.

The Doberman faltered slightly, seeming surprised by the reaction, and Hannibal put a gentle hand on Will's shoulder.

"it's alright." Hannibal said softly "Nigel can be loud and obnoxious, but he'd never hurt you."

Nigel looked from Hannibal to Will and back again before asking something in the other language again, Hannibal responded and Will could tell by the look on Nigel's face that he understood.

He held his hand out slowly "Sorry I scared you, I didn't mean it. What's your name?"

Will gave a weak smile "Will." He said, taking the bigger canines hand, "it's nice to meet you."

Nigel smiled, "It's nice to meet you too Will. I may not be good for much but if you ever need me, I'll be there for you, Ok?"

Will nodded and smiled, feeling safe with the larger dog, Nigel's smile grew and Will saw Hannibal smile too.

'this is the first time I've sincerely smiled in so long...' Will thought. 'It's…nice…'

Will was introduced to Hannibal's other dogs, a timid Spaniel named Adam, a Boxer named Bobby, and a large Mastiff named Duncan.

Will was intimidated by Duncan at first, the Mastiff was HUGE. But after half an hour, Will found himself cuddled in Duncan’s lap, wrapped in the mastiff's arms on the sofa with the other canines. Duncan was intimidating, but he was a gentle giant, sweet as could be.

Over the next week or so Will grew accustomed to his new life with Hannibal and the other canines.

Will would get up in the morning, wash up and get dressed, go down and have breakfast, then help Hannibal get ready for work by packing his lunch for him while he finished getting ready, then he would watch TV with the others or maybe read a book, Will even helped Alana with her rose bushes and garden on occasion, meeting Alana's feline Margot too.

As the days passed Will managed to get more relaxed about the people around him, without the fear of retribution for any small slight, Will was able to slowly come out of his shell.

Will was at Alana's after helping with the roses again, when she mentioned how protective the other canines were of him. "I've never seen them like that before." Alana smiled, looking at the line of faces in the window next door, "It's actually kind of sweet."

Will chuckled softly, he agreed with her, he liked having other canines around that cared so much. He liked having them to snuggle with at night to keep the bad dreams away… he liked having a pack.

Soon enough, Will reached a point where he would join the others on trips to the dog park while Hannibal was at work.

It was on one of these trips that Will saw a car pulling up to the park… one he recognized…

Duncan was closest, having been playing catch with Will, he saw the look on Will's face and was next to him in a moment.

"Are you alright, Pup?" He asked softly.

"He's here…" Will choked out, staring at the car, "He found me…"

Duncan moved so fast, Will was shocked to find himself on Duncan's back like a baby koala as Duncan whistled quickly, a moment later, Nigel was next to them, Adam perched on his back and a cursing Bobby under the Doberman's arm.

"We're going." Duncan said, "Now."

Then they were off, sprinting towards home and ignoring the angry yelling behind them.

Duncan pulled out his cell and called Hannibal, talking again in a language Will didn't know. When they got home, they hurried inside.

Adam jumping down and starting to lock the door just as he finished the last lock there came a loud bang on the door.

Will stifled a scream and scrambled back, hand over his mouth as Duncan stood protectively in front of him. Then came another bang, then another.

"WILL! WILL, I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE! MY FRIEND SAW YOU AT THAT PARK! YOU CAN'T HIDE! OPEN THIS DOOR RIGHT NOW!"

Will cowered in the corner as he continued to slam into the door, the other canines gathering around him protectively, he was glad the big oak door could hold its own as the banging lessend.

"Will..." the voice was softer now, kinder, like how he'd try to soothe Will after he'd beaten him before, "You need to come home Will... I need you there with me... please Will..."

Will didn't answer, then came another big bang "I'LL BE BACK WILL! AND WHEN I COME, YOU BETTER BE LEAVING WITH ME OR SO HELP ME I'LL BURN THIS FUCKING PLACE DOWN!"

With a last bang Will heard the footsteps retreating.

Will stayed huddled in the corner shaking and sobbing, the other canines huddle close, comforting him as much as they could.

What could he do? what would happen now... Father had found him and things were going to change for the worst... after a while he heard the locks clicking.

He flinched back slightly but then the door opened and there was Hannibal.

Hannibal moved to them quickly, "Are you all alright?"

The others nodded, but Duncan still held Will close.

Hannibal nodded and closed and locked the door, "Alright… come on."

Hannibal moved to the couch and sat down, all the canines hurried over and piled on, Will found himself sitting between Hannibal's legs with the others packed close on either side.

Hannibal smiled gently, turning on one of their favorite movies and gently brushing Will's curls until the stress left his shoulders and he slowly slumped back against Hannibal's chest, falling asleep as the stress bled away.

Hannibal picked Will up gently, taking him to his room and laying him down, then he turned to the other canines, "Alright, are you ready?"

They all nodded, Adam moving to the bed, climbing up and curling up with Will.

Then Hannibal and the other canines were off, following the scent of the one who had threatened their family.

Will woke the next morning under a pile of canines.

All the others were piled on top of him snoring away.

Will was grateful for it, he knew they would keep him safe, but currently… it was a little hard to breathe… especially with Duncan on top of all of the other canines on top of him.

Now Will knew what the bottom of a burger bun felt like…

The door opened then and Will saw Hannibal smile at him before he whistled slightly.

Will would never know how he wasn't trampled in the ensuing chaos, but somehow, he was left (mostly) unscathed as the other canines stood by the bed.

Will stood quickly and waited like the others.

Hannibal chuckled softly and nodded, "Time for breakfast."

Everyone rushed to the dining room, at least, as rush as you can be while not being rude, and everyone sat at their places.

Hannibal brought out the food and they all ate happily.

"So, what shall you do today?" Hannibal asked softly.

"The park!" Bobby said excitedly, his tail thumping against the chair back.

Nigel bopped him on the back of the head, "Did you already forget what happened yesterday?" He hissed.

Will looked at his plate sadly, they couldn't go to the park, a place they all loved, because of him…

"I'm not feeling very energetic right now," Duncan said softly, ignoring the scuffle across the table, "maybe Nigel can take Adam and Bobby to the park for a while while Will and I watch some movies together."

Will was surprised, but it was quickly overridden by thankfulness, Duncan smiled at him before continuing.

"As long as Nigel thinks he can handle it."

Nigel laughed loudly, currently holding the swearing Boxer in a headlock, "Adam's no trouble, I just need to keep mister 'I can take all of you!' away from that Irish Wolfhound from across the street, we'll be fine."

"I can take you just fine you fucker!" Bobby snarled, trying to wiggle free, kicking and punching with almost zero effect against the Doberman.

Will giggled, the look of the two making him smile, at the sound, everyone looked at him, beaming.

Will blinked, worried he did something wrong, but Adam spoke.

"That's the first time you've laughed!" The Spaniel said, his own tail wagging happily.

Will realized that they were right, he hadn't laughed in so long…

Duncan ruffled his curls gently, "Proud of you, pup…" he murmured softly.

Will smiled happily.

Hannibal nodded, smiling slightly himself before looking at Bobby and Nigel, "You two are on clean up after breakfast," when they tried to protest, Hannibal held up a hand, "You know there is no fighting- or swearing- at the table, as it was helpful to Will, I won't stop you from enjoying the park today, but I will request that you clean up."

Nigel and Bobby nodded, looking sulky and Will fought from laughing again. After eating, Will helped Duncan and Adam pack Hannibal's lunch, then, before he left, Hannibal gave Will’s ears a scratch, "Don't worry, alright?" He said softly, "Noone will hurt you, not with us around."

Will nodded, blushing slightly, "Thank you… for finding me that day…"

Hannibal smiled, "I am very glad I did."

Will smiled at him before Hannibal moved out the door.

"So," Duncan said softly, "What would you like to watch?"

Will curled up against the mastiff's side, “Anything, really…”

Duncan chuckled softly, stroking Will's curls gently, “You'll be alright, pup…” he murmured, “We'll always be here, you're safe.”

Will smiled, “I know… I'm not a stray anymore…”

They both laughed at that before turning on a movie and relaxing.

End Notes

There is a chance that I will continue this someday, but I'm so focused on other projects right now, I just want to share what I have done and hope you all like it!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!